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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E AND USUN NY:W.BRENCICK
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH INVITATIONS TO
SEPTEMBER MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS

REF: STATE 80096

11. ACTION REQUEST: See paragraph 4.

12. On September 11, 2007, Ethiopia, which follows the Julian calendar, will celebrate the New Year and thus the Ethiopian Millennium. The GOE, NGOs, and many private organizations are planning large-scale celebrations (reftel) to mark the event and to focus attention on the theme of development in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), for its part, is planning an event for which it seeks to gather senior religious leaders from a variety of faiths, together with current and former government officials and NGO leaders from around the world, to discuss "global economic justice, poverty and the scourge of HIV/AIDS" in a public forum. The event is to be held in Addis Ababa on September 25 and 26, 12007.

13. The patriarch of the EOC, Abuna Paulos, requested Post's assistance in delivery of invitation letters to the following principals:

- President William Jefferson Clinton;
- President Jimmy Carter;
- Vice President Al Gore;
- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon; and
- World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

Post delivered the invitation to Robert Zoellick during his recent visit to Addis Ababa. Post has also passed the invitations to President Clinton and President Carter through Clinton Foundation and Carter Center offices in Addis Ababa, respectively.

14. ACTION REQUEST: Post seeks the Department's assistance in the delivery of the invitation letters to UN SYG Ban Ki-Moon and Vice President Gore. Post will forward the original invitation letters to the AF/E for delivery. Post appreciates the Department's cooperation. END ACTION REQUEST.

15. COMMENT: Post recommends a positive response to the Patriarch's invitation. The Ethiopian Millennium represents a very significant event, both culturally and politically. VIP attendance from the USG and international organizations at the Millennium celebration would underscore support for promoting peace, security, and development in Ethiopia, and would advance public diplomacy goals as well as reinforce strong Ethio-U.S. bilateral relations. END COMMENT.
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